



The Quarterly Mill Status Report provides the latest information on mill openings, closures, disruptions, investments, and other mill events in British Columbia (B.C.). For the latest available list of active mills, please refer to the “Major Primary Timber Processing Facilities in British Columbia” report online at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/forestry/competitive-forest-industry/forest-industry-economics/fibre-mill-information>

Mill Openings/Re-openings:

On Oct 26, Neucel announced its plan to recall several laid-off employees to prepare dissolving pulp mill in Port Alice for winter operation, asset preservation and site visit of potential investors. A Chinese investor asked Neucel to prepare a restart plan that included significant changes to the current process to reduce operating costs and increase production capacity. This investor had also contracted a U.S. company to conduct an engineering assessment of this mill.

In November, West Fraser completed its year-long rebuild and update of their WestPine MDF mill in Quesnel, B.C. after a major fire in March 2016. Production has returned to normal and moisture resistant MDF was also introduced as a product line.

In December, the Cedar Valley Specialty Cuts (i.e. a shake and shingle mill) added a post and rail mill at the old dimensional lumber mill site in Valemount after setting up a 20-year fibre agreement with the Valemount Community Forest.

Temporary Mill Shutdowns/Shift Reductions:

On Nov 2, a major fire occurred at Tolko’s Lakeview sawmill in Williams Lake. This mill fire lasted about five days, resulting in 75 temporary job losses and payment reductions for 170 workers. The saw filer and mill offices were impacted by the fire but there were no injuries. Tolko is taking six months to rebuild the burned mill and the office areas. During the reconstruction period, the planer in a separate building at the site is working with three shifts. Tolko’s Soda Creek and Quesnel sawmills will also increase their shifts to put 20-40 workers back to work.

On Dec 13, Louisiana Pacific’s Peace Valley OSB mill was shut down due to a chimney fire. The mill closed for four hours. There were no injuries and the cause of the fire was under investigation.

Mill Investments and Upgrades:

In October, Skeena Sawmills improved log utilization by installing a new small log canter line and a new log scanner. The \$10-million investment in the small log canter line included quad re-saw capability and in-line gang, which would help the company to process small logs. The scanning system provides a three dimensional re-construction of all inner features in each log to maximize the value of all boards cut. Up to 50 per cent of the company’s licensed standing wood volume was comprised of pulp quality logs.

In November, West Fraser applied for an amendment to its Air Quality Permit to accommodate its multi-million-dollar investment into the processing equipment at its Quesnel Sawmill to replace three low-efficiency cyclones inside the mill with two high-efficiency cyclones outside for dust mitigation.

On Dec 7, Western Forest Products entered an agreement to acquire a lumber processing and distribution centre in Arlington, Washington from Hampton Lumber. The purchase price of the transaction was about USD \$9 million. Western Forest Products will benefit from the reduced export duties on sales to U.S. customers as the facility will allow the company to upgrade the lumber value of products in the U.S.

Contact: This report is prepared by the Economic Services Branch of the Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development. Please email your questions to mill.survey@gov.bc.ca.

Sources: The sources include company news releases, media reports, analytical information, and government contacts. Please note this list is not comprehensive and may miss some events that occurred in small mills. Image courtesy of val-li_mark / [CC BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/).